

846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.²

• 852 [851] During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 [851] Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A vodun priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, werewolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A joke against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

854 [851]

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his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lary one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the ceremony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant; and in addition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an important role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though 608 582 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only marriage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.³

851 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it 852 608 does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies 852 782 with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] "Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' ga'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lawou gagné l'empî' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-mème qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here."

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced.

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow.

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of

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- 851 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of "Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and " arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into " armies " with their seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[339]	" Rat, rat, rat, M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou, Ba'm yun vieille dent."	" Rat, rat, rat, I give you a nice little tooth, Give me an old tooth."
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- 871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arithmetic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

861 It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exercised before grandparents than other relations, for while there

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are no customary playmate or joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, a man would rather go to his grandparents when in trouble than to his parents or uncles, because of the greater indulgence they show him. 603
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At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work. (451)

If a family can afford the expense, children begin to be prepared for their first communion at eight or ten years of age; but members of poor families must wait until the money can be found — which means that some classes of candidates include grown men and women. At about the customary age for confirmation the children are informed of the family vodun 852
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- 000 • Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.
- [114] • Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.
- Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.
- Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146-8.
- A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 53-6.
- Compare Mackenzie, i, 28-9.
- The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his economic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42-3.

CHAPTER V

- [852] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the newborn infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the *vodun* priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"
- [845] • Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the *marassa* [twins] that the teeth have developed."
- [844] • Price-Mars (I), 235, derives the importance of the god-mother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 35-6, and Mackenzie, i, 275-4.
- [608] • Craige, 68-9, and Wirkus, 97-9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.
- Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It

is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

CHAPTER VI

- The institution of *placage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203-4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 75 and 307.